implementing a scheme financed through funds available with Marketing Committees/Board to provide financial assistance to the farmers and labourers in case of death or illness by operating the agricultural machinery/implements and undertaking other operations at the level of farm or mandi.

(d) and (e) Since the markets set up under the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Acts do not facilitate direct and free marketing, marketing reforms have been given focused and priority attention. This also covers supporting services, *viz.* grading, standardization and storage. The Government has dafted a model Agricultural Produce Marketing Act, to enable the States to carry out necessary amendments in the APMC Acts, thereby allowing new markets for growers to sell their produce. As on date, 9 States have carried out amendments to their Acts. External markets are becoming increasingly important for Indian fanners in response to growing globalization, and the compelling need to avail of the opportunities from international trade in agriculture. With a view to facilitating increase in exports, the Foreign Trade Policy, 2004-09, has emphasized the importance of agricultural exports and announced a number of me: sures like Special Agricultural Produce Scheme (Vishesh Krishi Upaj Yojana), Funds for Development of Agri Export Zones (AEZs), etc.

Population stabilization by coordination with States

*295. SHRIMATI JAMANA DEVI BARUPAL:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Prime Minister has pruned the National Commission on Population from 131 to 44 members to ensure its more effective functioning in achieving population stabilization;

(b) whether the Commission will direct implementation of policy with a view of achieving population stabilization by promoting synergy among demographic, education and environmental agencies, etc;

(c) whether the Commission has sought to promote coordination in planning and implementation of population policies across the Central and State Government agencies; and

(d) if so, upto what extent the Commission is likely to achieve these aims and objectives?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. On 11th April, 2005, the National Commission on Population (NCP) has been reconstituted with 44 members including 3 permanent invitees under the Chairmanship of the Hon'ble Prime Minister. The Terms of Reference of the Commission are as under:

(i) To review, monitor and give directions for the implementation of the National Population Policy with a view to achieve population stabilization by promoting synergy between demographic, educational, environmental and developmental programmes.

(ii) The National Commission on Population (NCP) shall promote intersectoral coordination in planning and implementation across Government agencies of the Central and State Governments.

(iii) The NCP would facilitate the development of a vigorous people's movement in support of the National efforts at Population Stabilization.

(iv) The NCP would facilitate initiatives to improve performance in the demographically weaker States in the country.

(d) As per the above terms of reference, the NCP would be the body to review, monitor and give directions for the implementation of the National Population Policy. While 10 States/UTs have achieved the replacement fertility level of 2.1, 16 States/UTs are likely to achieve before 2010. The main challenge lies in the demographically weaker Empowered Action Group (EAG) States. The National Rural Health Mission launched by the Prime Minister on 12th April, 2005, seeks to address the issue of population stabilization and plans to bring down the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) to 2.1 by 2010.